

Angelina M. Wood,
the 2001 Trial Court Employee of the Year

Norfolk Superior Court's Angelina Wood Named Employee of the Year

Angelina M. Wood, an Operations Supervisor II who has worked in the Norfolk Superior Court Clerk's Office for Criminal Business for twenty-five years, has been named the 2001 Trial Court Employee of the Year.

Ms. Wood was nominated for the honor by seventy-five people — a record number — who inundated the Employee of the Year Selection Committee with letters describing how unfailingly helpful she had been to them. Nominations arrived from people working within and outside the court system, including a Justice of the Supreme

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Trial Court Law Libraries Place Patrons at Center of Planning for the Future

Prompted by rapid changes in information technology and the desire to be responsive to the public's needs, the Trial Court Law Libraries are in the midst of strategic planning for the future.

Seventeen Trial Court Law Libraries are located in courthouses and other buildings throughout Massachusetts. The libraries, established by statute in 1842, provide access to laws, cases, and in-depth legal resources for everyone from the general public and unrepresented litigants to students, attorneys, and judges.

At a conference in May that included representatives of the many different users of the libraries, Fitchburg Head Law Librarian Peter Anderegge defined the fundamental role that the law librarians play. "Librarians catalog books and troubleshoot computers and negotiate with vendors, but all those activities are to serve that one overarching purpose: there is information, there is someone who needs that information, how do we get the two together?"

The most frequent questions that the law librarians receive concern landlord/tenant law and probate and family matters, yet the subject matter ranges across the legal spectrum, from admiralty law to zoning regulations. Just a few years ago, connecting people with the information they needed may have primarily consisted of directing a visitor within a law library building to an appropriate card catalog and then to a shelf of printed resources. The availability of printed material depended on the amount of physical space within the building.

'Computer technology has greatly expanded the range and complexity of information systems. It has redefined how people find and use information.'

— Chief Justice for Administration
and Management Barbara A. Dortch-Okara

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Journalists Receive Second Year of 'Law School' Education

Supreme Judicial Court Justice John M. Greaney, at right, gives advice on how to read and write about appellate opinions to an audience of about sixty print and broadcast journalists, during the April session of the "Law School for Journalists" at The Boston Globe auditorium.

The other faculty members were, from left, Superior Court Judges E. Susan Garsh, Hiller B. Zobel, and Margot Botsford, and retired Massachusetts Appeals Court Justice Rudolph Kass, who also moderated the session. The judges gave presentations on legal terminology, rules of evidence, and access to court proceedings. A session covering the same topics was held earlier in the month at the Channel 5 (WCVB-TV) television studio in Needham.

The Law School, designed to help reporters, editors, and producers better understand the court system, was co-sponsored by the SJC Judiciary/Media Committee and the Flaschner Judicial Institute. Two sessions covering different topics also were held last autumn.



Employee of the Year

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Judicial Court, a member of the U.S. Congress, judges, clerks, state and federal prosecutors, defense attorneys, law enforcement officers, and her office coworkers.

"Angie truly loves her job, and it shows," Norfolk Superior Court Clerk of the Courts Walter F. Timilty wrote in his recommendation. "She is a shining example of our office and we are proud of the great reputation which she has earned."

Everyone who nominated her commented on both her professional excellence and personal kindness. "She knows the statutes, rules of court, and all the people to call both in and out of the court system to get answers to questions," says her supervisor, Assistant Clerk Janice C. Uguccioni. "Whenever I ask her to do something, before I can turn around she has it done. She makes it all look effortless, and she is never too busy to help. She always has a warm smile and a kind word.

"She is a terrific mentor, and not just to new members of the office staff.

'Angie truly loves her job, and it shows. She is a shining example of our office and we are proud of the great reputation which she has earned.'

— Norfolk Superior Court Clerk of the Courts
Walter F. Timilty

She constantly is giving guidance to attorneys. We even got a nomination letter from an attorney in Greenfield whom she had helped over the telephone."

Ms. Wood herself is quick to credit her coworkers for the efficiency of the office. "We all get along great, and help each other. It's a very nice place to work," she says.

Ms. Wood began working in the Clerk's Office on July 1, 1975. One of her special projects over the past year has been to help her office adjust to the

Court's newly computerized docketing and case information.

"My grandchildren knew more about computers than I did when we started," she said. "At first I felt intimidated, using a computer for things that we had been typing for twenty-five years." Yet she became comfortable with the technology so quickly that First Assistant Clerk Mary K. Hickey credits her in helping everyone else learn how to use it. Now, Ms. Wood says, "it's amazing how quickly we can do things, and do them much better, too."

In addition to Ms. Wood, the Trial Court also recognized the extraordinary efforts of fifteen other employees who won Employee Excellence Awards. The winning employees were selected from more than 300 nominations this year.

At a ceremony on June 13 in Dedham, Chief Justice for Administration and Management Barbara A. Dortch-Okara and Chief Justices of

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Now, however, the process can be very different. Trial Court Law Librarians recently have fielded email questions about Massachusetts law from as far away as Australia, Norway, and Israel. The information sought now may be on CD-ROM, available over the Internet, or in an electronic database available only by subscription.

"Electronic technology has greatly expanded the range and complexity of information systems," observes Chief Justice for Administration and Management Barbara A. Dortch-Okara. "It has redefined how people find and use information."

Marnie Warner, the Administrative Office of the Trial Court's Law Library Coordinator, notes that in addition to technological change, impetus for the law

libraries' strategic planning stems from nationwide efforts among both court systems and libraries to seek input from the public. For more than two years the Massachusetts court system has been participating in the National Public Trust and Confidence Project, which the American Bar Association, the Conference of Chief Justices, the Conference of State Court Administrators, and the League of Women Voters created, in part, to improve the judiciary's responsiveness to public needs. At the same time, the American Library Association has issued a guide, called "Planning for Results," with a similar goal for the nation's libraries.

The Trial Court Law Libraries began soliciting public advice by holding a series of "town meetings" at eight

law libraries and courthouses in December and January. All users of the libraries were invited, and a broad cross section of judges, attorneys, business leaders, court personnel, librarians, teachers, and students responded to the invitations.

36 Pages of Ideas

Over the course of the eight, two-hour meetings, the patrons generated twenty-four pages of priorities and goals for the libraries, supplemented by another twelve pages submitted to the libraries via its Website (www.lawlib.state.ma.us). The seventeen Head Law Librarians organized the information into broad themes.

From the themes, working groups of library staff developed a list of seven specific areas in which the libraries could improve: publicity, extending hours, improving library design, training patrons on how to use electronic resources, obtaining adequate computers with consistent connectivity, adding more staff, and handling information in a variety of formats.

In May, the law libraries asked about forty judges, court personnel, attorneys from large and small firms, and law librarians — many of whom had attended a town meeting — to become "strategic implementors" and to brainstorm about how the libraries might accomplish their goals. At the conference, funded by a grant from the Reinventing Justice Initiative, the implementors fleshed out specific goals



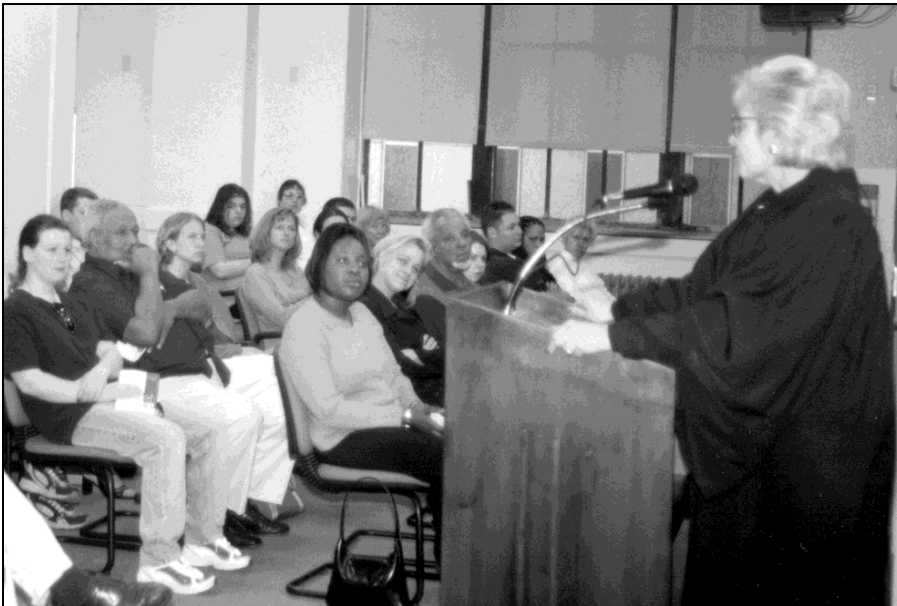
Law Library Coordinator Marnie Warner, right, writes down ideas brainstormed by a group of "strategic implementors" at the Trial Court Law Libraries' planning conference in May. Seated at the table, clockwise from right, are Superior Court Judge Robert J. Kane, Worcester Head Law Librarian Suzanne Hoey, town meeting participant Susan Oslin, Administrative Office of the Trial Court's Planning and Development Department Director Mary Jane Moreau, Essex Law Library Assistant Robin Bates, and Mark Prior of AOTC's Information Technology Department. Standing at left is meeting facilitator Ruth Fraley.

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the Trial Court Departments presented Employee Excellence Awards to the following individuals: Erin V. Albano, Case Specialist at Gloucester District Court; Carol A. Ambroseno, Administrative Coordinator at the Probate and Family Court Administrative Office; Leonora E. Arneson, Probation Officer at Falmouth District Court; Charles R. Benedict, Probation Officer at Plymouth District Court; John J.

Bish, Probation Officer at East Brookfield District Court; James J. Boyle III, Assistant Clerk-Magistrate at Malden District Court; Maria C. DeMarco, Case Coordinator at Cambridge District Court; Laura M. Dupree, Case Coordinator at Worcester Probate and Family Court; Theresa Galindez, Probation Case Specialist at Boston Municipal Court; Jane G. Gaus, Sessions Clerk at Barnstable County/Town of

Plymouth Juvenile Court; Dorothy Lockhart, Judicial Assistant at Boston Municipal Court; Winifred C. Lyman, Probation Case Coordinator at Plymouth County Juvenile Court; Jose A. Mejia, Sessions Clerk at Essex Superior Court; James F. Polin, Associate Probation Officer at Suffolk County Juvenile Court; and Michael U. Smith, Court Officer at Cambridge District Court. ■



SJC Chief Justice Marshall Discusses Importance of Jury Service

Suffolk County residents reporting for jury duty at the John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House at Post Office Square in Boston got a surprise visit from Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall on Law Day, May 1.

The Chief Justice, whose videotaped message is shown to jury pools throughout the Commonwealth, discussed the importance of jury duty as a part of statewide Law Day celebrations.

With the move of the Boston Municipal Court to the McCormack Court House, the pool currently provides jurors to both the BMC and Suffolk Superior Court.

Law Libraries

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in each of the seven areas, and added two more priorities: developing a long-range facilities plan, and planning the technical infrastructure to support the new information systems.

The next step will be to compile their ideas into one master plan that will guide the libraries' development — and related budget requests — for the foreseeable future. Once it is approved by the head law librarians and the Chief Justice for Administration and Management, the plan will be submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, where accomplishments made under the plan will be assessed each year.

Outstanding Questions

While the plan will provide a solid blueprint for the future, it will not answer every question that has arisen. Some of the suggested goals, such as extending library hours, would be relatively simple to accomplish.

"There doesn't seem to be a strong need to, say, stay open until 10 p.m.," Ms. Warner says, "but people would like us to be open until 6:30 or 7 p.m. so that they might have more parking and access after their work hours." The two identified barriers to extended hours — already in effect at the Lawrence Law

Library at the Fenton Center — are funding and ensuring that the security of other court facilities in the same building as the library is not compromised.

Perhaps the most difficult questions to answer, however, concern whether library resources should be available in print, electronically, or both. "People at the town meetings told us that treatises, for example, have to be available in print," Ms. Warner says.

And while the new technologies can open up untold volumes of information to the user, there also can be difficulties in accessing them. Even once the infrastructure required for Internet access is put in place, the availability of information may be subject to renewable licensing agreements, meaning that funding would have to be consistent over many years. Moreover, a technology that is new today may become obsolete tomorrow, possibly blocking access to information in that format.

"The questions of books versus electronic formats is a huge one for all libraries," Ms. Warner says. "But if we waited for an answer for every question we had, we would never get started."

The plan also will provide the basis for future budget requests. "Having concrete ideas about what needs to be done

will help us get the necessary funding," she says.

Despite the questions ahead, the planning project already has accomplished one of its key goals. It has demonstrated to library users that the Trial Court Law Libraries care deeply about serving their patrons as capably as possible.

Susan O'Leary, a sole practitioner in Dedham, enthusiastically participated in both the town meeting at the Norfolk Law Library in December and as a strategic implementor in May. "At the law library they asked, if we had a wish list, what would that be? Now today [at the May conference] we've had the chance to discuss what we need to get there. This has been a tremendous opportunity."

Ms. Warner adds that the basic theme of the initiative is to let people know that the Trial Court Law Libraries are ready, willing, and able to help users in many different ways. "People can already reach us in multiple formats, by calling us, emailing us, faxing us, or coming in person.

"People often don't realize how technological we already are. If you call us, we usually can send information to you wherever you are. People need to know how we can connect with the world, and how they can connect with us." ■

Jury Schedulers Answer Courts' Busiest Phones

The caller from Roxbury was more than a little worried. She had been summonsed for jury duty, but she didn't have anyone to care for her young children that day. She called the toll-free number on her jury duty summons card and reached Operations Assistant Supervisor Stephen S. Sloss at the Office of Jury Commissioner.

Mr. Sloss explained that although the caller's circumstances did not disqualify her from jury duty, she could reschedule it for a specific date within a year, and that her family obligations created a hardship that allowed for her to be transferred to the court closest to her home. Looking at a chart at his desk, Mr. Sloss noted that the Roxbury District Court had a Child Care Center, gave her the telephone number and the days and hours the court was in session, and told her how to fill out her juror response card with the postponement and transfer information.

By the end of the conversation, the caller sounded relieved, and even looking forward to the day she could report for jury duty.

1,500 Calls a Day

"This is ground zero for the jury system," Mr. Sloss says of the Office of Jury Commissioner's Juror Help Line and the ten jury schedulers who staff the telephones. "For many people we're the first contact they have with the entire court system."

Jury Commissioner Frank R. Davis notes that his office sends out about 5 million pieces of mail each year, including approximately 1.2 million summonses and 3.8 million follow-up notices, all of which prominently display the Juror Help Line number (1-800-843-5879).

The office generally receives between 600 and 1,200 calls a day, but may receive as many as 1,500. "The phone room by far deals with more members of the public than any other office of the court system," he says.

To handle the volume, the ten jury schedulers staff the telephones every business day from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



Jury schedulers at "ground zero" of the jury system are, from left: John O'Sullivan, John F. Spencer, Michael S. Leary, Luis A. Luna, Tyaisha S. Peterson, Deborah Wheaton, Glenn Brownell, Stephen S. Sloss, Nina E. Lee, and Carmen L. Diaz.

'Much of what we do has an educational purpose. If someone calls and complains about a jury assignment, then we can explain the reasons behind the assignment.'

— Operations Assistant Supervisor
Stephen S. Sloss

Callers typically reach a scheduler immediately for a conversation that lasts an average of three minutes.

Many of the callers are not particularly happy about being summonsed. Mr. Sloss likens the role of the jury schedulers to that of a doctor for the jury system. "We only hear from people who have problems," he says, "and our waiting room is almost always full. We constantly hear about how 'my neighbor never gets called as much as me.'"

"Often the callers are upset when they call, and they're looking for someone to fight with," adds three-year Help Line veteran Carmen L. Diaz.

"But if they don't find that person, then they calm down. You have to have

patience. If you don't have patience, then I don't think you could do this kind of work. First you just have to listen, and then you can try to help them."

The most common calls are from people who want to postpone their assignment or transfer their service to a court closer to home. Everyone is allowed to postpone jury duty to a specific date that is within a year of the initially assigned time. Transfers can be granted for only a limited number of hardship reasons, including medical conditions.

'One-Day, One-Trial'

The schedulers also are armed with a thorough knowledge of the statute, G.L. c. 234A, that established the current "One-Day, One Trial" jury selection system. Under the system, citizens serve only one day or, if selected to sit on a jury, for the duration of one trial. Last year, ninety percent of the people who served on a jury did so for only one day, while only three percent served four days or more.

Previously, jurors sat for a month, but people in approximately thirty occu-

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pations were exempt. "In 234A there are recognized disqualifications from jury duty, but there are no exemptions," Commissioner Davis says. "There's a big difference. This system is much more inclusive than the old one."

The statute was approved by the Legislature in 1978 and took effect in Middlesex County the following year. By order of the Supreme Judicial Court, counties were added to the system each year until 1988, when it became effective throughout the state.

The statute defines ten reasons for which people may be disqualified from jury service: they are not a U.S. citizen; are under eighteen years old or are seventy years old or over and choose not to participate; unable to understand English; physically or mentally incapable; responsible for the care of a disabled person living with them; have permanently moved outside the county for which they have been summonsed or do not plan to return within a year;

have been convicted of a felony within the last seven years; or have served jury duty, for either the state or federal courts, within the last three years.

It also establishes the process by which citizens are assigned to jury pools at fifty-five courthouses throughout the Commonwealth. The Office of Jury Commissioner compiles a master list of Massachusetts residents from annual census lists submitted by the state's 351 cities and towns. People are summonsed from this list. Some may be disqualified from serving on a jury, such as those under the age of eighteen and those who have been called for jury duty within the past three years.

The 1.2 million people summonsed are randomly selected from the list by computer and are given notice twelve weeks before they are scheduled to appear. They are given ten days in which to respond, but those who do not respond within six weeks are issued a

second summons. People who ignore that summons and the several following warnings have warrants issued for their arrest and can be fined \$2,000. Commissioner Davis adds, however, that arrests and fines are rarely necessary.

The system is designed to create jury panels that are representative of the population of an entire county, thus requiring the summonsing of prospective jurors to the various courthouses throughout the county to ensure adequate diversity in all jury pools. It does provide, however, grounds for the Commissioner's office to grant transfers to the closest court for people who otherwise would suffer undue hardship. Such cases include parents with limited child-care options and people who are unable to drive at night.

"The statute was extremely well thought out," Commissioner Davis says.

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ABA Experts Advise Court Leaders on Equal Justice Strategies

Trainers from the American Bar Association's Council on Racial & Ethnic Justice met with Massachusetts judges, court staff, and leaders of the legal community in May to discuss national and state strategies for promoting equal access and fairness in the courts.

Chief Justice for Administration and Management Barbara A. Dortch-Okara opened the meeting, called "Nuts & Bolts: Strategies for Implementing Equal Justice," which was facilitated by Boston Juvenile Court Judge Leslie E. Harris and Southern New England School of Law Dean Robert V. Ward.

A review of initiatives conducted around the country was provided by ABA Council on Racial & Ethnic Justice Special Advisor Paulette Brown and Staff Director Rachel Patrick.



Facilitators and organizers of the Equal Justice program at the Brooke Courthouse in Boston included, from left, Boston Juvenile Court Judge Leslie E. Harris, ABA Council on Racial & Ethnic Justice Staff Director Rachel Patrick, Trial Court Affirmative Action Officer Mira B. Dandridge, Chief Justice for Administration and Management Barbara A. Dortch-Okara, ABA Council on Racial & Ethnic Justice Special Advisor Paulette Brown, and Southern New England School of Law Dean Robert V. Ward.

COMPASS POINTS



National Model of Women's Corrections Center Opens in Boston

The Suffolk County Women's Resource Center — a national model of innovative, community corrections services for women — held a grand opening ceremony in Boston on May 10. The Center, which opened in January, is a non-residential day treatment program for up to fifty women convicted of non-violent offenses.

The Center is the result of a close partnership among several departments of the criminal justice system. At the ceremony were West Roxbury District Court First Justice Kathleen E. Coffey, Commissioner of Probation John J. O'Brien, Office of Community Corrections Executive Director Stephen V. Price, Suffolk County Sheriff Richard J. Rouse, and Massachusetts State Parole Board Chairman Michael J. Pomarole.

Like all Community Corrections Centers, it offers a combination of treatment and sanctions programs, including substance abuse counseling, job and life-skills training, and parenting classes, as well as random drug testing, electronic monitoring, and community service. As of mid-May, eighteen Community Corrections Centers were fully operational throughout Massachusetts, with six more in various stages of planning and development.

Justice Fair Draws Crowd to Northampton Court

Several hundred members of the public attended the Hampshire County Reinventing Justice Project's second annual Justice Fair in Northampton on May 30.

Representatives of more than thirty Trial Court departments, offices and affiliated agencies gave workshops and staffed information booths on Gothic Street outside the Hampshire County



From left, SJC Justice Roderick L. Ireland holds his "Excellence in the Law" Award, beside Massachusetts Bar Association President Edward P. Ryan, Jr., fellow award recipient Dan Rea of WBZ-TV, and Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly publisher Paul Martinek.

SJC Justice Ireland Cited for 'Excellence in the Law'

The Massachusetts Bar Association and Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly presented Supreme Judicial Court Justice Roderick L. Ireland with one of two "Excellence in the Law" awards at a dinner in Boston in May. WBZ-TV reporter Dan Rea also won the award, given to individ-

uals for their contributions to the integrity of the legal system.

Lawyers Weekly said Justice Ireland was selected for his involvement in the Supreme Judicial Court's Judicial Youth Corps and for his court opinions' sensitivity to how the law is perceived by the general public.

Courthouse to help explain their role in the justice system and distribute written materials.

Inside the Courthouse, the Fair included several panel discussions, and concluded in the evening with a mock sentencing hearing, presided over by Northampton District Court Judge Richard J. Carey.

The event was organized by Hampshire County Reinventing Justice Project Director Karen Henell, Hampshire Probate and Family Court Sessions Clerk Diane Houle, Hampshire Superior Court Chief Probation Officer Paul R. Kingston, Assistant District Attorney Cora-Jean E. Robinson, Holyoke Attorney Gordon P. Shaw, and Northampton Attorney Lisa Van Gordon d'Errico.

Fair in Ware Focuses on Children's Issues

Inspired by last year's fair in Northampton, the Ware District Court on May 22 also held a justice fair, which focused on children's issues. More than two dozen Ware area court offices, law enforcement departments, and service agencies set up information booths at Ware Town Hall, to help educate the public on the services they provide.

With the support of Ware District Court First Justice Nancy R. Dusek-Gomez, the fair was organized by Case Coordinator II Dorothy Witaszek, Head Administrative Assistant Paulette Charpentier, and Temporary Assistant Clerk David Roy.

COMPASS POINTS



Housing Court Chief Justice E. George Daher addresses the twenty-seven Housing Specialists who completed a thirty-hour course in mediation.

Housing Specialists Complete ADR Training

Twenty-seven Housing Specialists from the five divisions of the Housing Court successfully completed thirty hours of mediation training.

The training was the first program sponsored by the Administrative Office of the Trial Court for

a court department to train court personnel in mediation skills. It was held at the Edward W. Brooke Courthouse in Boston and consisted of six, five-hour classes taught by Metropolitan Mediation Services of Brookline.

Judicial Youth Corps Begins 11th Season

The Supreme Judicial Court's Judicial Youth Corps kicked off its eleventh season in May with fifty-five high school students in Boston, Springfield, and Worcester.

The program begins with weekly educational sessions on the courts and law.

On July 9, the students will begin their summer internships at court offices in the three cities, supplemented by the continuing educational sessions on Fridays, which include field trips and mock trials.

The program is managed by the SJC's Public Information Office.

Legislative Resolutions Mark Mediation Week

Trial Court personnel, legislators, and mediators formally opened Massachusetts Mediation Week 2001 in a ceremony at the State House on April 23. The House and Senate approved resolutions, sponsored by Representative Stephen Kulik and Senator Cynthia Stone Creem, respectively, to mark the occasion.

The week of events publicized the availability and benefits of court-connected Alternative Dispute Resolution programs throughout the Commonwealth. The week comprised twenty events held at more than a dozen sites from Greenfield to Boston, including displays, forums, workshops, role-play demonstrations and panel discussions.

Juror Help Line

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He credits the first Jury Commissioner, Joseph Romanow, with writing most of the statute and creating an effective, equitable jury system.

Scheduler as Educator

Mr. Sloss agrees that the clarity of the statute makes his job much easier. "The statute makes a lot of sense," he says. "Much of what we do has an educational purpose. If someone calls and complains about a jury assignment, then we can explain the reasons behind the assignment."

Explaining the statute and the assignment process goes a long way toward calming down any callers who are irritated at being assigned to a courthouse on the opposite end of their county. "Most people come around quite well once they see that there really are good reasons for everything we do," Mr. Sloss says.

"We want people to know that this is not an arbitrary process," Mr. Sloss says. "It is intended to get more representative jury panels, not to inflict unnecessary hardship. We take very seriously a defendant's rights to a trial by a jury of their peers." ■

The Court Compass

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